

Dear Mr. Rash:

Thank you for your testimony before the Mississippi River Commission during the public meeting in West Memphis, Arkansas, on August 20, 2002. In your statement you congratulated Mr. R.D. James on his upcoming reappointment to the Commission and provided an update on several active Corps projects in your levee district. You also expressed concern regarding the anticipated Fiscal Year 2003 appropriations.

The Commission acknowledges your support for the renomination and confirmation of Mr. James as a member. He has been an invaluable member of the Commission.

The Memphis District is now about 90 percent complete with the installation of relief wells at Blue Lake, Arkansas. This work is scheduled to be completed early this fall. The Memphis District awarded a contract for the construction of the outlet ditches for these wells on August 1, 2002. The notice to proceed was issued to the contractor on August 15, 2002. The contractor has mobilized on the project site and has started some of the channel cleanout work. Construction is scheduled for completion in December 2002.

The Memphis District completed a draft Design Documentation Report (DDR) on the Ten and Fifteen Mile Bayous in August 2002. The draft report has been reviewed and comments are being incorporated into the report. The final DDR should be completed in September 2002. If funds are available, contracts for

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replacement of the U.S. Highway 79 bridge at mile 15.8 and the St. Francis County road bridge at mile 13.8 will be awarded in Fiscal Year 2003. The first item of channel work on Ten and Fifteen Mile Bayous could also be awarded in the third or fourth quarter of Fiscal Year 2003, subject to the availability of funds.

As you observed, the Fiscal Year 2003 budget request is considerably less than the Corps 2003 capability and is also less than what was appropriated in Fiscal Year 2002. There are no funds in the Fiscal Year 2003 budget request for the awards

of new construction contracts in the tributaries components of the Mississippi River and Tributaries project, including the St. Francis Basin construction program. The Memphis District staff will keep you informed about its 2003 activities in your levee district as Congress finishes its work on the appropriations bill and the President signs the bill into law.

The Commission appreciates receiving your views and will be pleased to hear from you at our future public meetings.

Sincerely,

Don T. Riley  
Brigadier General, U.S. Army  
President Designee, Mississippi  
River Commission